

CHRIST

SERMON

The absolute necessity, Godliness,
practise of Repentance,
a godly, able, and faithful
Christ.

Wherein is discovered
the great necessity thereof,
the great folly and danger
that delay and put off
unto a false hope.

Together with the great
that shall be to them
timely and seasonable.

The eleventh Edition.

From that time Jesus began
for the Kingdom of Heaven
Luke 13. 3. Except ye repent

G L A
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By John Hart, D.D.

H.L.

MITCHELL
GLASGOW

CHRISTS FIRST SERMON O R,

The absolute necessity, duty and Christian practice of Repentance.

Acts 17. 30. 31. *The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world by righteousness.*

The blessed Apostle Saint Paul in these words Beloved, endeavours to raze off the superstitious Athenians from their idolatry, and worshipping of false gods, gods of silver and gold, which were made by the work of mens hands: And this he doth by endeavouring to convince them of the vanity of idolatry; and then secondly, in laying before them the power and goodness of God in making and governing the world and all things therein. Good (saith he in the foregoing verses) made the world and all things therein, and is Lord over all, and gives to all life, and health, and all things: And in him we all live, and move, and have our being: And it is he that breatheth the air of our habitations. Therefore (saith he) you need not think that the God-head is like unto gold, or silver, or stones, graven by art of mans device: For God is

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of heaven & earth. I, but say these Idolaters (like some now adays) we did as our fore-fathers did, they worshipped such Gods as these, & were of y^e same religion, as our fore-fathers were. But, saith the Apostle, this was done in ignorance, and the times of this ignorance God winked at: Your fore-fathers had not the light of y^e Gospel, they never heard of Iesus Christ, but now saith he, Christ is preached, and the light of the Gospel shines forth in the world, therefore now ye must repent, and turn from these idols, and serve the living God. Now God commands all men every where to repent, although God in times past suffered all Nations to walk in their own ways: Now hath he sent us to preach Christ unto you, that you should turn from these vanities, and serve the living God. If your fore-fathers sinned, it was through their ignorance, & want of the knowledge of Iesus Christ: But if you sin and go on in your idolatry, it is through wilfulness, and God will be revenged on you. In the words you may observe these four things: First a duty commanded, and that is repentance: Secondly, the Commander, and that is God, God commandeth: Thirdly, the persons to whom this command is enjoyned, and that is all men every where, high and low, rich and poor, all the world over: Fourthly, and lastly, the time when, and that is now: Now God commandeth all men every where to repent, now in these times of the Gospel: To day if ye will hear my voice, saith God, Mat. 23. 37. From the words thus opened, I shall make you these four particular observations: The first is, that repentance is a needfull and necessary duty commanded by God: Secondly, that every man and woman in the world is bound to repent: Thirdly, & the doctrine of the Gospel is a doctrine of Repentance. It was Christs first Sermon, as you may see, Mat. 4. 17. Iesus began for to preach, & to say, repent. Fourthly,

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ly, and lastly, observe from these worke, that
 pecks more, and looks for more from man, than
 Gospel, then from those who never heard of the gosp.
 These four observations are all of them very clear from
 the words of the text. I shall only therefore give you
 some few further proofs of them from scripture.
 I proceed in the opening and handling of the two first
 observations, & from thence I shall draw sundry pias-
 tical uses, which I shall endeavour, by Gods assis-
 tance to apply home unto your souls. I shall then
 joyn the two first observations, into one third proposi-
 tion, thus. That repentance is a needfull and neces-
 sary duty commanded by God, and that every man and
 woman in the world is bound to repent. **Exhortation to**
 repent (saith Christ Luke 13. 3.) ye shall perish
 and 2 Pet. 3. 9. God is not willing that any should
 perish, but that all should come to repentance. And I
 live (saith the Lord, Ezek. 33. 11.) I have no pleasure
 in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn
 from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye, from your
 evil wayes: For toby will ye die, O house of Israel.
 And in Mat. 3. 2. Repent, for the Kingdom of hea-
 ven is at hand. And so likewise in Acts 2. 38. Repent
 and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus
 Christ, for the remission of sins, Repentance is need-
 full for all; There are none so wise, none so learned,
 none so holy, but stand in need of repentance. In many
 things, saith St. James, we sin all, James 3. 2. And
 in Rom. 3. 23. All have sinned, young ones have sin-
 ned, and therefore have need to repent, & that because
 lest as St. Paul saith, Heb. 3. 12. Through the ne-
 cessitfullness of sin their hearts be hardened. It is good
 for young ones, yea it is the best course they can take,
 as Solomon saith, Eccles. 12. 1. To remember the
 Creator in the dayes of their youth: And not to pro-
 off repentance unto old age, or the death bed.

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too late: For although true Repentance is
too late, yet late repentance is seldom true. It is
God's observation of a holy man, saith he (speaking of
the repentant thief) God saved one at the last hour,
that others might despair, and but one, that none might
presume. I know that wilt not repent when thou mayst,
it may be God will not give thee time to repent here-
after when thou wouldst. Dost thou think to do that
in the old age which thou wilt not do in thy youth?
Canst thou do it in one hour on thy death-bed, which
thou art not able to do sufficiently all thy life-time?
And then likewise old men have need of Repentance,
they have lived a long time in sin, & have long enough
too long neglected Repentance. Young men may
despise, but old men cannot live long: Therefore,
both young and old have need to repent, that they may
excuse the remission of their sins, Mark 1. 4. And
for your better understanding of this great and neces-
sary duty of repentance, I shall a little show you what
it is, and that briefly. Repentance is of two sorts,
either real and unfeigned, or seeming & hypocritical.
Seeming repentance that is common to wicked men,
and is altogether legal, arising from the accusation of
their own consciences, such a Repentance as this, was
that of Judas. And then there is a real and unfeigned
Repentance, which doth properly belong to the godly,
and this is likewise of two sorts, Legal & Evangelical,
Legal repentance that comes from the law, giving us
the sight of our sins, and our misery by sin: The law
our School-master to bring us to Christ. Gal. 3. 24.
But Evangelical Repentance, that springs from faith
in Christ, and carries out the soul unto Christ in oppo-
sition to every sin, and to a forsaking of every evil way,
Repentance then I shall thus describe: I say, Repen-
tance is a gift of God, by which a believing sinner be-
ing cast down in the sight & sense of his own sins, doth
utter-

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utterly forsake, and abhorre all his former works, and turns to the Lord with a perfect heart.

I say, it is a gift of God, & which comes from above, not from nature: it is a flower never grow in nature garden, neither birth nor breeding, neither art nor learning, nor any other sublunary power or qualification is able to beget repentance. True Repentance comes from above. Every good and perfect gift (saith St. James) comes from above, James 1. 17. Grace doth not grow here below, but comes down from the Father of lights. The Apostles, Acts 11. 18. Glorified God that to the Gentiles he had granted repentance unto life. Repentance is the quickning of a dead Soul, and therefore must be the act of him who is the giver of all life. We are all of us by nature dead in sins & trespasses, Eph. 2. 1. A man by nature is no more able to perform an act of true grace, then a dead person in the grave is able to do an act of nature. They that live in sin (as St. Paul said of the widows that live in pleasure, 1 Tim. 5. 6.) are dead while they live, Repentance then is the gift of God, Act. 11. 18. God granted repentance unto life. So, 1 Tim. 2. 25. The Ministers of God are required to instruct those that oppose themselves with meekness: If God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the truth & they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil. It is said of Christ, Acts 5. 31. He is exalted to be Prince and Saviour to give Repentance unto Israel. Faith & Repentance are supernatural works, & are made as well creat new heavens, & a new earth, as the acts of our selves: It is God alone that worketh in our hearts, by the efficacious operations of his Spirit, 2 Cor. 3. 5. We are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves: But it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, Phil. 2. 13.

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Repentance is a change first of the heart, of the whole man. There must be a new heart, a new hand, a new life, and a new head. All things must be new where Repentance is. If any man be in Christ (saith the Apostle) he is a new creature, 1 Cor. 5. 17. Repentance makes a man a new man, & it is only in the power of God to renew our hearts, neither Angels nor men are able to do it. In Jer. 31. 18. 19. saith Ephraim, turn thou to me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after I was turned I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed; yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Here is the character of a true Repentant, it is the Lord that must change our hearts, it is he only that must give us new hearts, & take from us these hearts of stone. It is the Lord that must pluck us out of the snares of the Devil, and cast down the strong holds of sin in us. If God do not turn us, we shall never be turned. After that I was turned I repented saith Ephraim. But I proceed to the description of Repentance.

It's a gift of God, I say, whereby a believing sinner turns from all his sins unto God: I say, a believing sinner, because faith must first proceed & go before repentance, for none can truly repent but he must first believe. There may be in a sinner that which we call legal repentance, which may cause a sinner to fall out of his sins, and it may be to loath them wth a kind of detestation, it is possible a wicked man may repent before he knew what sin meant, or that ever he had any such sin: All this may be, and yet no true repentance, because no true faith: for true repentance uses a hatred of sin, as it is displeasing to God, as ill as hurtful to our selves, yea he hates sin as hell, worse then hell it self, which cannot be in an unbelieving

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unbelieving soul. It cannot be denied but that Repentance is a saving grace, and if so, then none can partake of this saving grace, till he be first united unto Christ the fountain of all grace: So then faith must needs be before repentance.

Secondly, where true repentance is, there is a change wrought in the whole man and a turning. First, to our selves, secondly to God: & thirdly to man. An unrepentant sinner is out of himself, and he is not only out of his way but out of his wits. In Luke 15. 17. When the prodigal came to himself, he said, father, I have sinned, this is the first step of repentance, self-returning. Secondly, repentance is a returning to God: If thou wilt return, O Israel, return unto me. Jer. 4. 1. The grace of Repentance is suitably expressed by this act of returning to God. And they who did not repent, are said not to return to God. In Amos 4. 1. God saith notwithstanding I have given you cleannesse of teeth, and want of bread, yet have you not returned: Notwithstanding I have withholden y^e rain from you, & smitten you with blastings & mildew, and sent among you the pestilence, notwithstanding I have slain your young men by the sword, and overthrowen some of you, as I overthrowe Sodom & Gomorrah by fire, yet have you not returned unto me saith the Lord. Repentance is a turning from sin to God. Sin turns men from God, and draves the soul into the ways of death. Jam. 1. 4. A man is draven away of his own lusts, & enticed: draven away from God & from the truth of God: But when once Repentance comes, he turns back again, he changes his mind then, and abhors himself for what he had done. Job 42. 6. I abhor my self and repent, (saith Job) in dust and ashes. The prodigal was draven away from his fathers house through his own lusts, and yet at last he returned first to himself, secondly, to his father. Luke 15. 17. When he came to him-

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And I will arise and go to my father, & say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and I am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Sinners are said to be mad, but repentance brings men to their right wits again. Every impenitent sinner is a mad man, a meer Bedlam. Who but a mad man will run himself wilfully into the fire, as every wicked man doth, he runs head-long to destruction, but repentance turns men from this madness, Acts 16. 18. It is called, a turning of men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Sin is a darkness, and when men sin they know not what they do but repentance enlightens men, and sets them at liberty, Acts 26. 20. Repentance and turning to God are put together, they are one and the same, the one cannot be without the other: But it is not any turning that doth this, but it is a turning of the judgement, & and a turning of the will and affections: So that men that are turned, are carried wholly from sin and wickedness unto God, Joel 3. 12. Turn unto me (saith God) with all your heart. If it be with a piece, it is nothing worth, it is altogether deceitfull.

Thirdly, Repentance is a returning to men: we must not be ashamed to acknowledge our faults one to another, Jam. 5. 16. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another. If ye have done any man wrong, we ought to acknowledge it. Is it so then, that repentance flows from faith in Jesus Christ, and turns men from sin unto God? When I observe that there are many in the world who as yet never knew what true repentance meaneth, because they are yet in unbelief, and without faith, without which there can be no repentance. Men may cry bitterly, and humble themselves in sack-cloth and ashes, as Ahab did: men may have the horrors of hell in their consciences, as Judas had: men may reform many things that are amiss,

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amiss, as Herod did; and yet being unbelievers, are still in the estate of impenitency. It is an infallible demonstration & they never yet truly tasted of the love of God in & pardon of their sins, who dare presume to take a liberty to sin, or delight themselves in any sin whatsoever. They that truly believe, cannot, dare not allow themselves in any sin: for as faith purifies the heart, so faith and repentance keeps the heart pure, and makes the conscience tender: and the more pure the heart is, the more will it abstain from all things that are evil.

Then secondly, is repentance the gift and grace of God, whereby a believing sinner being humbled under the sight and sense of his sins, doth truly turn to God: Then we may observe, that where true repentance is, there is also humiliation for sin. It is not possible that ever any soul should truly repent, that is not truly humbled and cast down in the sight and sense of his sins. Turn unto me, (saith the Lord) with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. Joel 2. 12. The Ninivites when they repented, they humbled themselves from the highest to the lowest: And this also shews us, that the greatest part of men and women in the world, never yet truly repented, because they were never truly humbled. It is not every kind of sorrow that works repentance, but as it is in 1 Cor. 7. 10. Only godly sorrow worketh repentance, never to be repented of. And as there may be a counterfeit repentance, so there may be a counterfeit humiliation. The signs and marks of true humiliation are these: First, the soul that is truly humbled for sin, is very free in confession of sin. And the Scriptures tell us, that those which have been most humbled for sin, have been freest in the confession of their sins, as David, Nehemiah, Job, and others. Psal. 51. 3. saith David. I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. And

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As this confession of sin will be in some measure suitable to our humiliation: If our sorrow for sin be sincere, our confession will be so to; therefore all those who are lesse afraid to commit sin then they are ashamed to confess sin, were never yet truly humbled for sin, neither shall their souls reap any benefit by it. Prov. 28. 17. He that covereth his sin shall not prosper; but who so confesseth and forsaketh them, shall find mercy. They that will not find out their sins to confess them, to be sure one day or other their sins shall find them out to torment them. If sin find us not out in youth, it will find us out in age. If it find us not out in health, yet it will find us out in death. If it find us not out in death, yet it will find us out after death, in the day of judgement. Either one time or another our sin would find us out. Numb. 25. 33. Your sins (saith God) shall find you out.

Secondly, Godly sorrow and humiliation for sin, causeth the soul that is humbled utterly to loath, and abhorre and hate sin: Ezek. 16. 43. He shall remember your iniquities and doings, wherein you have been defiled, and ye shall loath your selves in your own sight, for all the evil that you have committed. Sin is odious and hateful to an humbled soul. I abhorre every false way. (saith David.) Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy Law. Psal. 119. 126, 164. Nature may teach men to loath sin in others, but it is only grace that teaches us to abhorre sin in our selves. When Judah, Gen. 38. 24. heard that his daughter Thamar had played the Harlot, he presently cast sentence of death upon her; Bring her forth (saith he) that she may be burned: But when he saw by the pledges that the sin was his own, Judah was then silent, no more talk of burning her then. A soul truly humbled, will hate sin wheresoever it is, especially in his own bosom: men will flee from venomous and hurtful creatures.

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creatures toheresorder they are, especially if they be near them, because they are then in most danger to be hurt by them: All the sins of the world cannot do a soul so much hurt as his own sins: Then they that do not hate sin in themselves, are not truly humbled for sin.

Thirdly, he that is truly humbled, is willing to take shame to himself, the humble sinner is willing to be ashamed of his folly, Ezek. 16. 53. That thou mayest remember and be ashamed; and never open thy mouth more, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the LORD.

Fourthly, a truly humbled soul will be willing to receive the word of God with all readiness: For what is the reason men are no more humbled for sin? Surely this, because they despise or neglect the good word of God, which is the only means to get humility: The humble penitent soul is the most tractable and teaching soul in the world, and he above all others is willing to embrace the word of GOD.

Fifthly, a true humble soul is ready and willing to put in practise all these duties which he hath formerly learned out of the word of God: When Paul was once truly humbled, he conferred not any longer with flesh and blood, but laying aside all carnal reasoning, goes on thorowly in the work of preaching the Gospel. Gal. 1. 16. Thus you may see that where true repentance is, there is also true humiliation and sorrow for sin; Then every one learn to be humble and that betimes: For as tomen the longer they are ere they bring forth children the harder is their labour: even so they that put off Repentance to old age, must expect the sorer travell, Lamentably are they mistaken, who put off their Repentance to their old Age: Is it likely, that the pains and weakenesse of old age will be any advantage or ease to they Repentance? Heb. 12. 17.

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er's said, That at the pouring forth of the fourth vial, when GOD smote the inhabitants of the earth with a scorching heat, that they blasphemed the Name of God, & repented not. Its a woful thing to put off repentance to a pained body, or to a sick bed, Pain in its own nature fit rather to blaspheme and turn from God, then to return to God: And it's very common that sick persons either repent not at all, or if they do, at the best their repentance is but a sickly repentance: sickness both not only abate and restrain the power of mens lusts, it never destroys the life of sin, death it self cannot kil sin: Wicked mens sins live when they are dead, the grave cannot consume them, nor the fire of hell: The sins of unbelievers remain not only in their guilt but in their power to all eternity.

Is it so then, that repentance is a turning from sin to God, then I observe that there can be no true repentance where sin is delighted in: He that lives in the love and practice of any sin, knoweth not what repentance meaneth; for repentance takes off the heart from the love of sin, and workes it to such a dislike of sin, that it abhors the very occasion of sin. If sin comes and tells a gracious penitent Soul of the profits and pleasures of sin, O (saith the gracious heart) the sweetness will prove bitterness in the latter end. True Repentance takes off the heart from all sin, as well smal as great, not from some few sins, but from all sins: For he that turns not from all, turns from none in truth: And it is not enough to turn from all sin, but we must turn from the commands of sin and Satan unto the commands of God, from worldliness to heavenly-mindedness, from pride to humility, from hatred and envy, to love: The tree that bears not good fruit will be helven down and cast into the fire, as well as the tree that bears ill fruit. I beseech you therefore brethren in the bowels of mercy, for the Lords sake I

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increat every one of you that desire to be saved, that you would turn away from all your iniquities, and that speedily, lest your repentance be too late: And to this end, be earnest with God by prayer, for the assistance of his spirit in the suborning of thy sins, and cast thy self wholly upon the LORD.

Every true penitent is wholly the Lords, the desire of his soul is to God, and to the remembrance of his name; with his soul he desires God in the night, and with his spirit within him, he seeketh the Lord in the morning, *Psal. 26. 8, 9.* He is now a constant suiter at the throne of grace, and with full purpose of heart he cleaves to God, and loves the place where his honour dwells, *Psal. 26. 8.* All his desire is to know more of God, and how he may love him more, and serve him better: the service and servants of God, how joyful are they to his soul? He takes all opportunities of doing good, he keeps his heart with all diligence, and the doors of his lips, that he offend not with his tongue, *Psal. 30. 1.* His heart is so enflamed with the love of God, that he endeavours with all his might to shew forth the praises of the Lord: By which it appears, that a turning to God, is not barely a turning from sin, but practising of good, and a walking uprightly before the LORD in all well-pleasing, all our dayes.

Is it so then, that Repentance is needfull, and absolutely necessary for all persons; In what a sad condition then are the greatest part of men and women in the world, who as yet are as far from true repentance as light is from darknes, and yet, poor souls, they smooth themselves up with this conceit, that God is merciful, and they hope to be saved as well as the best, and they thank God all is well with them; and yet notwithstanding they never repented of their sins: True Repentance is a grace almost out of fashion in these self-conceited times, wherein mens minds are so much

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much running after novelties and outward formalities; but the power of holiness, and the doctrine of repentance and self-mortification, these are not minded; nay, by many are accounted Legal, and altogether needless.

There are three sorts of people which I shall have occasion to speak of in the use of this Point; and the first are such as altogether abhorre Repentance; the second are such as although they acknowledge repentance is needfull, and necessary for others, yet think that they themselves have no need of it; and the third sort are such as do confess that repentance is needfull even for themselves, as well as others, but not yet, it is time enough hereafter, there is no such haste of it. And I hope in the handling of these three sort of persons I shall make it appear, that Repentance is needfull and necessary at all times, for all sorts. Having done this, I shall remove some lets that hinder men from Repentance, and to give you some few motives to stir you up to Repentance: And then to wind up all in a few words of application.

I begin with the first of these, those that abhorre Repentance; and they are wilfull sinners, such as go on in sin, and make it even their trade to sin; wilfull, desperate and dissolute wretches, that laugh at Repentance, who declare their sin as Sodom did, and hid it not, Isa. 3. 9. who will not be brought to abandon their wicked wayes, but go on still in swearing, and cursing, lying and blaspheming, whoredom, drunkenness, and all uncleannesse, & that in greediness, as the Apostle saith: who mock at faith and Repentance, as those scoffers did, 2 Peter. 3. 4. These are they, as St. Peter saith, 2 Peter 2. That walketh after the flesh in the lust of uncleannesse, and count it pleasure to riot in the day-time; whose eyes are full of adultery, that cannot cease from sin: O but the latter end of these men is worse then the beginning. How many
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wicked toretches are there, that liues as if they had made a covenant with death and hell, and were at an agreement with the grave, who had rather hazard their souls than leave their sins; who, as if there were neither heaven nor hell, run on from one sin to another. Come (say they) we will fetch wine, and fill our selves with strong drink, and to morrowe shall be as this day, and much more abundant. But, *Isa. 56. 12.* Delouunto them (saith the Prophet) that haue rewarded evil to themselves. How little do those men think, that God will one day wound the hairy scalp of such as go on in sin? And that tribulation and wrath, indignation and anguish shall be upon every soul that doth evil, *Rom. 2. 9.* Let men slight Repentance neuer so much, a time will come when they shall repent, but that too late, even in hell fire for ever. For sin must be repented of, if not on earth, yet in hell: And if you will not loath your companions of sin here, ye shall loath them in hell hereafter: Your pot companions, and your harlot companions shall loath one another in hell: When these bloody wounds shall bleed which you have given your souls in the dayes of your iollity and pride, and in the times of your desperate impieties, when nothing but wrath and horreur of conscience shall appear before you; then these sweet morsels of sin, which have been sweet as honey to your lustful appetites shall be vomited up as the bitterest and loathsome things in the world. Consider this all ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you, *Psal. 50. 12.* Be willing to forsake your sins, for sin and the soul must part, or else hell and the soul shall meet together: The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all that forsake God, *Psal. 9. 17.* O that you would seriously lay these things to heart, and now even now in this your day, that ye would know the things that belong unto your everlasting peace. To day if ye will hear my voice

voice (saith God, in the 95. Psalm) harden not your hearts. Slight not, scorn not, resist not the good word of God that induceth you to Repentance, but break off your sins by repentance & turn to God in righteousness.

And now for the second sort, and they are such as think they need no Repentance: And they are either such as are morally civil, and honest before men, or else formal and hypocritical Professours, who seem to be, and are not, who profess God with their lips, but deny him in their lives: O they have no need of Repentance, they are no drunkards, nor swearers, nor such like; God, I thank thee (said the proud Pharisee) I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, Luke 18. 11. These are such as profess God, and know much of the mind of God, and therefore have no need of Repentance: They are guilty of no sin to Repent of: But of these it may be said, as Peter said of Elimas the sorcerer, Acts 13. 10. That they are full of all subtilty, and enemies to all righteousness, who never yet knew what sin meant. For they that think they have no sin left to repent of, it is a clear Argument that they never yet truly repented themselves of any one sin at all, but that they are still in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity: For repentance is a continued act, and a grace that must have its daily operation, as faith and love must continue, so must Repentance: When once the rocky heart of a sinner is smitten by God, the water of Repentance will continually flow: Sincere Repentance cannot content themselves with one act or two of Repentance, but they must daily renew their Repentance, for sin will renew, so must Repentance: Renewed sins must have renewed Repentance, till we have done sinning (and that will not be till we have done living) we must not have done repenting: If there be a leak in the ship, the water must be pumpt out, else the ship is in danger of sinking:
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we are leaking Cessels all of us; yea, the best of us
 in leaks in dayly, and there must be the pump of
 repentance to carry it out dayly, else our souls will be
 in danger of sinking. And for the other sort who think
 they need no repentance, they are pure moral honest
 men, who live in a course of civility, and take their
 penny to be as white as any others, these are as good
 as the best, and therefore have no need to be any better:
 They are not desperately wicked, as many are, they are
 no blasphemers, nor drunkards, they go to Church, and
 give every man his due, & are loving to their neighbors,
 and what needs any more. It is true, these things are
 necessary, and are required in a Christian; But yet
 civility without sanctity, at the best is but gilded
 Atheism; morality and seeming virtues are but gilded
 sins and glittering abominations: The LORD seeth
 many a rotten, base, stinking heart under a civil coat.
 If civility and morality would have served the turn,
 then the Pharisees would have gone to heaven before any
 other: they were civilly honest, they were no swearers,
 nor drunkards: they paid tythes, and gave alms, and
 prayed often: and carried themselves so exact in the
 world, that it was thought, that if but two men in the
 world should go to heaven, a Scribe should be one,
 and a Pharisee the other. But what saith Christ?
 Matth. 5. 20. Except your righteousness exceed the
 Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall
 not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And yet their
 righteousness far exceeds the righteousness of all out-
 moral honest men. Let a man be never so honest in
 outward apparance, let his carriage and behavior be
 never so spacious and plausible in the eyes of the world,
 let him be never so exact and just in his dealings with
 men; yet if he be not renewed in the spirit of his mind,
 he is never the better for this: If he be not a sanctified
 Christian, the word of truth never as yet came home to
 his

his soul in the power of it : he is still in the state of Nature, and without GOD, and as yet far from repentance and salvation.

And then there is a third sort of impenitents, and they are such as are convinced of the necessity of repentance, but they do not think it a time now to repent : they believe they must repent, but all in good time there's no haste of it yet, it will be time enough hereafter at the hour of death, when age and sickness is upon them ; and they think it a thing of nothing to repent, they can do it when they list, it is done with a wet finger, there needs no more but to say Lord have mercy on me, when they are going out of the world : this is the general disease with which most men are infected. But let such men know, that it is a hard matter to repent, and sin is very powerful : and if they do not seek to get it subdued in the strength of their days, it will be too hard for them at the last : for although men grow weaker and weaker, yet sin grows stronger and stronger : and being, as we say, bred in the bone nursed up by us in our youthful days, it will not easily be rooted out of the flesh. Can the black-moor change his skin, or the Leopard his spots ? Jer. 14. 23. Neither can those who are accustomed to do evil, leave it when they list.

If repentance be a thing so easie, how is it that many who soughe after it, could never obtain it ? How many are there that have roared and cryed in bitterness of their Souls, and in the horror of their consciences that they could not repent : O that I could repent ! O that my hard heart would break in pieces ! This hath been the cryes of many, It is not in the power of man to repent when he pleaseth: doth GOD give us space to repent now, it may be he will not do it to morrow : a man by nature, as he cannot of himself, so he hath no inclination of himself to repentance.

Repentance

Repentance is a heart work, a circumcising of the heart, and calling of sin out of the soul, which indeed will make the heart to bleed; which thing no natural man is either willing or able to do, Moritice (saith the Apostle) Col. 3. 5. Your members which are upon earth: which thing suits not with a natural man. Let no man then put off Repentance upon such foolish wicked thoughts as these, that repentance is an easie work, which a man may perform when he pleaseth: such sinful thoughts as these will deceive you. Thou that wilt not repent when thou mayest, when thou wouldst, it may be thou shalt not be permitted. You that will not repent when God gives space, how justly may he when thou wouldst deny it thee, because when it was offered to thee thou refusedst? Ezek. 24. 13. Because I would have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness saith the Lord. The longer men live in sin the stronger will sin grow in them. He that will not leave sin when he is young, will hardly leave it when he is old. It is said of wicked men, Job 20. 11: Their bones are full of the sins of their youth, which ly down with them in the dust. Not that mens sins are buried with them in their graves, for then they might be happy; but that they continue with them till death, yea after death. Many a time and often hath the Lord stood at the doo of mens consciences, and knocked to come in, Rev. 3. 20. Behold I stand at the doo and knock, saith Christ: I do not let God waite long: he hath waited a long time already to be gracious unto thee, Isa. 30. 18. Do not give the Devil the prime and strength of your dayes, and then think to serve GOD in your old age: you do not leave sin in this, but sin leaves you: You have not the strength and power to sin then as you have had, but still your hearts are as bad as ever they were; then put not off your repentance till sickness comes.

comes. Happy, yea thrice happy is that man, and blessed that he be, that in the time of his youth and health, furnishes his heart and soul with comforts against the evil day; happy is that soul, who when age and sickness comes, is so fitted for death by repentance, that when death comes he hath nothing else to do but to die. Be perswaded then to repent betimes before you go hence, and be no more seen: there is no time ours but the present time: we do not know whether we shall live another day, or another night: many that are in health one day, are brought to their graves the next. Our life, (saith St. James) is but a vapour that appeareth for a little time. James 4. 14. we are no sooner born, but we begin to die. Put not your selves off then from day to day: he that is unfit or unwilling to repent to day, will be so to morrow; therefore Seek the Lord while he may be found, Isa. 55. 6. There is a time when God will not be found, Prov. 1. 24. to verse 30. (saith God) Because I called and ye refused, and set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproofs; therefore will I laugh at your calamitie, and will mock when your fear cometh. When distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall ye call on me but I will not answer: They shall seek me early, but shall not find me. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord therefore shall they eat the fruit of their wayes, and be filled with their own devices. There is a time when mercy may be had; but if we neglect that time, it will not be recovered again, though it be sought for with tears. There is a time when with the wise Virgins we may enter into the wedding: but if we take not that time we may with the foolish ones have the door shut against us, Mat. 25. Then we may knock and call, yea cry Lord, Lord open to us: but the LORD shall say unto us, I know you not. The old world had

had a long time of Repentance: a hundred and twenty years did Noah preach repentance to them, and yet they repented not: but the Simeonites they had but a short time given them, but forty days, and yet they repented. They made the hay of Repentance whilst the Sun of Gods patience shined upon them.

God is not bound to wait mens leasure: the soul is but a tenant at will, and may be suddenly turned out at doors: and when you ly upon your sick-beds, the Lord may fill your hearts with such fears as may make your consciences altogether despair of mercy. God sent you his servants early & late, in season & out of season, to invite you to repent: but you will repent, you say, hereafter: you will if you can, you hope God will work it in you. What ground have you of this hope? Hath God made you any such promise? Thou cannot draw out the thread of thy life one minute: for ought thou knowest, this may be the last day: the tenders of mercy, and the offers of grace are at an end when thy life ends, if not before: you know that time and tide stapes no mans leasure. Every one is so wise as to take time and tide for worldly affairs: will any man be so sottish as to defer the time of his sowing till harvest? Men will not be carrying out of dung, when they should be fetching in of corn: no, they will dispatch those things first that are of more necessity. And is there any thing of more necessity then the salvation of your souls? will your souls be saved without repentance? or can you repent when you will? But you will say you are young, and therefore may be born with a white, which is the Devils divinity: for young men have no more liberty allowed them to sin, or to put off repentance, then old men have; it is the Devils policy to infuse this into thy brains, that he may enslave thee. It was the commendation of Timothy, that from a child he had known the Scriptures, 1 Tim.

1. Young Saints, say some, but not the word of God prove old Devils but I am sure it is a rare thing to see an old sinner become a young Saint. When the devil and sin hath lorded it in our souls yea tyrannized both over soul and body, for thirty or forty years together; do you think then, that a little groaning, or crying Lord, have mercy upon me, will be able to dispossess him at the last, he having gotten too strong a footing in your soul, to be beaten out of his quarters so easily. He that will not remember God when he is young and living, it is greatly to be feared GOD will be unmindful of him when he is old and dying. Therefore once more, I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, speedily to set about the work of Repentance; lest when it is too late, you repent, weep, and mourn, that you repented not before. Do not say to Repentance, as Felix spake to Paul: Thou wilt repent when thou art better at leisure: another time shall serve the turn. It may be thou mayest not live to another time; or if thou dost, thy heart may then be as hard, if not harder, then now it is. Would you not in the day of the Lord be in a worse condition than heathens or infidels are, then repent, would you not when you are dead be in a worse condition than Loads or Serpents, then repent.

It may be said of every impenitent sinner, as Christ said to Judas, in the 26. Watch. and the 24. vers. It had been good for that man if he had never been born. Heathens in the day of judgement shall be in a better condition then impenitent Christians; for they shall have the lesser condemnation, because of their ignorance; who it may be would have done better, if they had known more. It shall be more tolerable (saith our Saviour) for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgement, then for thou Capernaum. Thou England that art exalted up to heaven in Gospel-mer-

cies,

Christ's first Sermon.

cies, take heed and beware lest thou be not thyſelfe doctour
to hell in Gospel-vengeances.

I ſhould now ſhew you the lets that hinder men from
repentance, and ſo endeavour to remove them : but I
ſhall only name them, and ſo conclude with ſome ſeſe
motives, to ſtir you up to repentance. Now the lets
that keep men off from repentance, are either from ſin
or Satan, or elſe from our ſelves and the world. The
Devil perſwades men that repentance is a needleſſe
work, and men need not trouble themſelves with it, for
thoſe whom God hath ordained to life, ſhall be ſaved,
let them live never ſo looſely : and thoſe that he hath
appointed to death, ſhall be damned, let them repent
never ſo much. But to remove this let out of the way,
know this, that all thoſe that GOD hath ordained to
ſalvation, ſhall firſt or laſt, more or leſſe, be brought
to embrace the means. In the 13. of the Acts and the
48. As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.
God hath joyned the end and the means together, and
curſed is he that dares to ſeparate them. Salvation
without repentance is impoſſible : without holineſſe
no man ſhall ſee GOD, Heb. 5. 19.

A ſecond way by which the devil keeps men off from
Repentance, is GODS mercy. God is mercifull, ſaith
the Devil, his mercy is over all his works, and he
that made you will not damn you, you need not to fear
it. True it is, even to wicked men God is mercifull ;
but theſe are but mercies on the left hand, common
mercies. It is a mercy to men that they live, it is a
mercy that we were not born monſters, and it is a
mercy to have outward enjoyments : but what are theſe
to the peculiar mercies of God ? It was a good ſpeech
of a goſpeliſt, ſaith he, He that made thee without
thee, will not ſave thee without thee. If thou art in a
ditch, and ſeek to do no more to come out, but cry, God
help me, thou mayeſt ly and periſh. I do not dare to

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go on in sin, because God is mercifull, Shall we sin
(saith St. Paul) that grace may abound? No, God
forbid. I dare not, saith a gracious heart. If you
would partake of mercy, ye must depart from
iniquity, 2 Tim. 2. 19. Let every one that nameth the
Name of Christ depart from iniquity. I dare boldly
say, that if all the clouds of heaven should continually
shower down mercy, there would not so much as one
drop fall upon any impenitent person.

Chiefly, the Devil labours to keep men off from
Repentance, by bringing them to despair of mercy.
If he cannot work men into presumption, by the
consideration of Gods mercies, he will do what he can
to bring them to desperation, by telling them that
mercy is out of date. But let not this hinder the
Repentance; for as it cannot be too soon to repent, so it
is never too late to repent, better once then never.
I do not speak this that any should neglect to repent
times, but that none should ever despair of mercy, and
thereby be hindered from this duty of Repentance. A
second let that hinders Repentance, is the world, the
lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life, the pleasure
and preferments of the world; these fight against the
spirit, and resist the work of Repentance. Comptu-
ousnesse and drunkennesse unfits men for Repentance
therefore these must be abstained from (1 Pet. 2. 11.)
as things that war against the soul. Mortifie there-
fore, saith the Apostle, your members which are upon
the earth, fornication, uncleanness, &c. Col. 3. 5. These
must be mortified. And then a third let that keeps
men from Repentance, is sin; sin hath such a con-
quering power over the souls of unregenerated persons,
So that (as it is, Rom. 6. 10.) They give themselves
over as servants to sin, and to uncleanness. O then
for the LORDS sake avoide all occasions of sin.
Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies.

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that you should obey it in the lusts thereof: Neither
 yield you your members as instruments of unright-
 teousness unto sin; but yield your selves unto GOD,
 as instruments of Righteousness, Rom. 6. 12, 13.
 verses. O that I could prevail with you, and that
 the LORD would persuade your hearts of the
 dreadfull and dolefull condition of all impenitent
 sinners. Consider then, I beseech you, in the fear of
 the LORD, these following considerations. And
 first of all know this, you that live in the love of sin,
 you live in the hatred of GOD; for the love of GOD
 and the love of sin cannot possibly dwell together, and
 they that dwell in it, shall never dwell with GOD,
 Psal. 15. saith David, LORD, who shall abide in
 thy Tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy Hill?
 He that walketh uprightly, and troketh righteousness.
 And the Apostle saith? 1 Cor. 6. 9. Know ye not
 that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of
 GOD? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor
 idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers
 of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous,
 nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall
 inherit the Kingdom of GOD. And Psal. 97. Pe-
 hat love the LORD, hate evil. Also, 2 Tim. 2. 19.
 Let every one that nameth the Name of CHRIST,
 depart from iniquity. Secondly, all those that sin,
 are under the power and command of sin, are of
 the devil: For he that commits sin (saith St. Iohn)
 is of the devil, Iohn. 3. 9. And is it not a sad thing
 to be under the power of the devil? Every wicked
 man is the Devils slave, and he doth the Devils
 bidding: where ever sin is in the love of it, there is
 also the devil: the devil keeps court in wicked mens
 hearts. Thirdly, sin is the high way to destruction:
 it is not destruction to the wicked saith Job, chap. 3. 3.
 Yea, that it is: And a strange punishment to the
 workers

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workers of iniquity. Fourthly, and lastly; sin brings wrath and condemnation upon the soul: If we live after the flesh, we shall die, Romans 8. 13. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget GOD, Psal. 9. 17. These things being considered, and seriously taken to heart, methinks should not only awaken sinners out of their sleepy security, but also provoke them to Repentance. And then there is another let which hinders men from Repentance, and that is in themselves, which is of all others the greatest let: for did not our own base hearts deceive us, the devil, the world and sin could never hinder us from coming to God by Repentance; and these lets from our selves, are either from ignorance, or hardness of heart. Ephes. 4. 18. Men (saith the Apostle) through the ignorance that is in them, and through the hardness of their hearts, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, and to work all uncleanness with greediness. Ignorance must needs be a great let to Repentance: No wonder, when men know not the danger of sin, nor the necessity of Repentance, that they live in sin, and never come to Repentance. Who is there that looks for that he knoweth not of? If repentant sinners did but know what a dangerous condition they were in without Repentance, they would never suffer their eyes to sleep, nor their eyelids to slumber, before they had made their peace with GOD by Repentance. O then, for the LORDS sake, get acquaintance with GOD, and learn to know what an odious thing sin is, Job 22. 21. Acquaint now the self with GOD, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee, thereby thou mayest be brought unto Repentance. Then secondly, there is in us hardness of heart, which hinders the work of Repentance. It is said of Jehoiakim, 2 Chronicles 37. 33. That he hardened his heart,

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heart, that he might not return to the LORD his GOD. And this hardness of heart is very lamentable, because all the means which GOD useth to soften, work not upon it at all. And Pharaoh hardened his heart, and would not let the Children of Israel go. Exodus 8. 32. All the sore judgements of GOD upon him, could not prevail with his hard heart, he would not let them go. So wicked men whose hearts are hardened, they will not let their sins go. Neither the judgements, nor the mercies of GOD will prevail with wicked men to turn them from their sins, Amos 4. 12. saith GOD, Though I have sent amongst you judgement upon judgement, plague, famine, and noisome beasts, yet have you not returned unto me. Therefore, I helpech you, in love to your poor souls, that by prayer you would beg of GOD to give you softened hearts, that may melt and tremble at the word of GOD, lest by going on in your sins, ye bring upon your selves swift destruction. And so I come to give you some means and motives to stir you up to Repentance, and so I shall conclude.

The first and principal mean of working Repentance where it is not, is the word of GOD. Matth. 4. 17. And JESUS began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. CHRISTES first Sermon was a Sermon of Repentance; therefore if ever ye would repent of your sins, attend upon the word of GOD. What a woofull sad condition are those in that want the word of GOD? What the Preacher said, Eccel. 11. 6. In the morning, saith he, sow the seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand. So say I of hearing the word of GOD: Hear it in the morning, and hear it in the afternoon: Hear it in the LORDS day, and hear it in the week day; take all opportunities of hearing the word of GOD.

And

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And then a second help is, to consider the goodness and power of GOD, his Almighty, and his All-seeing eye: Consider, GOD sees and knowes all thy wayes, and is able to punish thee for all thy sins. If men were but convinced of this truth, they durst not sin so boldly as they do. But I passe by this, to give you some few evidences of the truth of Repentance, and they are briefly these.

First, the soul that hath truly repented is very carefull to avoid even the occasion of sin, and keeps himself at a distance both from sin and sinners: he will dispense with no sin at all, but will say as Cyhalin did, What have I to do any more with sin? And secondly, he that is truly turned from sin unto GOD, will endeavour to turn others also: He is not content that he himself is turned to GOD, but he will draw others to GOD also. Thirdly, he that hath truly Repented is very carefull to furnish himself against the assaults of the devil: Thy word, saith David, Psalms 119. 11. have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. A true repentant treasures up the Word of GOD in his heart, and walks worthy of the LORD unto all well-pleasing, being fruitfull unto every good work, and encreasing in the knowledge of GOD, Colossians 1. 10. They do it as in Psal. 119. 23. They keep the testimonies of GOD, and seek him with their whole heart: They also do no iniquity, they walk in his wayes. Their delight is in the Law of GOD, and in his Law do they meditate day and night, Psal. 1. 2. Fourthly, he that hath truly repented, is full of holy indignation against sin, and turns sin quite out of doors, he cannot endure the sight of it. Fifthly, he that hath truly repented, is full of fear, he is filled with an awfull reverential and filial fear of the Majesty of GOD, and he is afraid of displeasing GOD by sin. Sixthly, a true

a true penitent is full of holy and heavenly desires: He desires more of GOD, and more acquaintance with the wayes of GOD, more communion with GOD in Ordinances. Seventhly, true penitents are very zealous for GOD: How do I love the Law, saith David, in the 119. Psalm. A godly man cannot endure to see GOD dishonoured: As it is said of Lot, in the 2 Peter 2. 8. He vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlatofull deeds. And then lastly, where true Repentance is wrought, it will work a holy change in the soul: And whereas sin was formerly delighted in, the true penitent hath it in indignation: They will not only turn sin out of doors, but also are ready to cut it in pieces, as it were: True penitents have a feeling on their hearts for sin, and will loath themselves for the evil of their wayes. It is a hard thing for a man to loath himself, but true penitents loath and abhor themselves as Job did. A repentant eye sees matters enough in himself of self-abhorrency: Repentance lets us see what black dected creatures we are by nature, Ezekiel 30. 43. You shall remember your wayes, saith the LORD, and shall loath your selves in your own sight. And so much for the evidences of Repentance.

Is it so then, that Repentance is so absolutely necessary to Salvation, and that there is a great danger in putting it off from day to day: And that a sick-bed Repentance is no Repentance, or at most, but a sickly Repentance: How highly then doth it concern every one of us, even to day, while it is called to day, to begin our Repentance, and not only to begin, but to persevere in it to the end of our dayes: Let the time past of our lives suffice us to have wrought our own wills, and to have walked in our own wayes, and let us resolve for the time

time to come to live unto GOD, and not to be weary, for in due season thou shalt reap if thou faint not. Make Repentance thy daily work, that so thy peace may be made with GOD, and when thou comest to die, thou mayest have nothing else to do but to die. He that labours not to kill sin by Repentance in his life, will be very unfit to die when death comes, death is only welcome to a gracious penitent soul: They are not fit to die, in whom sin is not killed by Repentance; they have done nothing of that work which GOD sent them into the world to do, that have not repented: Repentance sweetens our lives, and takes away the bitterness of death, and only to penitent sinners is mercy promised. Consider there is an absolute necessity of Repentance, we cannot be saved unless we repent: Except ye repent, saith CHRIST, ye shall all likewise perish, Luke 13. 3. Consider also thy life is but short: Thou hast but a little time to live in the world, thou hast need to bestir thy self then, and to husband thy time to the best advantage of thy soul: Thy precious and immortal soul will be in danger of Hell fire, if thou repent not: For no Repentance, no salvation; and if thou dost not repent thee here of thy sins, thou wilt surely to thy cost repent thee hereafter in Hell for the neglect of Repentance: Thou wilt not curse then the day wherein thou didst despise Repentance; then if there be any love in thee to thy precious soul, what ever thou dost, repent. Consider also the end for which CHRIST came into the world, Matthew 9. 13. I came saith CHRIST, to call sinners to Repentance. Be zealous therefore and repent: And as John saith, Matthew 3. 8. Let us all labour to bring forth fruit meet for Repentance. Now the LORD work these

truths

first Sermon.
 ruths upon your hearts, and the
 one of us repentance unto life, Repentance
 never to be repented of: which
 the Lord of his infinite mer-
 cy grant unto us all.
 To whom be glory
 & honor for ever
 Amen.

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A short motive to

REPENTANCE

THe Glas doth run, the Cloak doth go,
Awake from sin, why sleep ye so?
In sin sleep not securely still,
Lest thou by sin thy soul dost kill,
While thou hast time do not delay,
Defer not off from day to day:
Thou art not sure to tarry here,
No not one quarter of a year,
No not one week, nor yet one day,
One hour thou art not sure to stay:
Thou hast not space in thine own power
To live one minut of an hour:
The present time see then thou take;
Thy peace with God in Christ to make.
Keep Faith and true Repentance still,
And then let death come when it will:
Thou art prepared for to dy:
And thou shall live eternally.

F I N I S.



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